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Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee)

Summary record of the 6th meeting

Held at Headquarters, New York, on Monday, 12 October 1998, at 3 p.m.

Chairman: Mr. Macedo (Mexico)

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* Items which the Committee has decided to consider together.

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The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.

Agenda item 18: Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples (continued) (A/53/23 (Parts II, V–VIII), A/AC.109/2102–2104; 2106–2110; 2112–2118)

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Agenda item 12: Report of the Economic and Social Council (continued)

Agenda item 90: Offers by Member States of study and training facilities for inhabitants of Non-Self-Governing Territories (continued) (A/53/262 and Add.1)

1. **Mr. Amorin** (Brazil), speaking on behalf of the States members of the Common Market of the Southern Cone (MERCOSUR), and Bolivia and Chile, said that those countries associated themselves with the statement made by the representative of Panama on behalf of the Rio Group. Stressing the importance and the success of the decolonization process that had been conducted under the aegis of the United Nations, he reaffirmed the commitment of the States members of MERCOSUR and associated countries to the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and to the relevant resolutions of the General Assembly and the Committee of 24. Referring to the dispute that still persisted between the Argentine Republic and the United Kingdom regarding sovereignty over the Malvinas, he said that it was encouraging that the two countries had markedly strengthened their bilateral relations, as was demonstrated by the visit to be paid by Mr. Menem, President of the Argentine Republic, to the United Kingdom at the end of October 1998. The cooperation instituted by those countries in the conservation of fish stocks and development of oil reserves in the South West Atlantic was also noteworthy.

2. In conclusion, he read out the Declaration on the Malvinas, adopted at the tenth meeting of the Presidents of the States members of MERCOSUR, Bolivia and Chile, in which they reaffirmed their support for the legitimate rights of the Argentine Republic and called for a rapid settlement of the question in accordance with resolutions of the United Nations and the Organization of American States.

3. **Mr. Eguiguren** (Chile) said that his delegation associated itself with the statements made by the representative of Panama, on behalf of the Rio Group, and by the representative of Brazil, on behalf of MERCOSUR. He stressed that the decolonization process was not yet over, since there were still 17 Non-Self-Governing Territories whose populations had not yet exercised their right to self-determination.

4. Chile supported the political process which was under way in New Caledonia, which had recently led to the Nouméa Accord. In that respect, he commended the cooperative attitude shown by France to the Special Committee in 1998. He also commended the Government of New Zealand for the spirit of cooperation it had always shown in its relations with the Special Committee in its capacity as administering Power of Tokelau.

5. With regard to the question of East Timor, the negotiations which had been undertaken between Indonesia and Portugal were significant.

6. The progress achieved in the identification process in Western Sahara was also encouraging. Chile hoped that the remaining issues would be resolved and that it would be possible to proceed to the referendum without any further delay.

7. Chile remained convinced that the search for a peaceful and negotiated solution between the Argentine Republic and the United Kingdom on the question of the Malvinas was the only possible option.

8. He wished to thank the Government of the Republic of the Fiji Islands for having hosted a regional seminar of representatives of Non-Self-Governing Territories, representatives of interested Member States, and experts.

9. In conclusion, he said that two years still remained for the Special Committee to eliminate all the remaining colonial situations. He therefore supported the proposal of the Acting Chairman of the Special Committee to convene a meeting in the near future in order to take stock of its work and plan its future activities. His delegation intended to contribute actively to that meeting and hoped that it would help the Special Committee fulfil its mandate by the end of the International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism.

10. **Mr. Ovia** (Papua New Guinea) said his delegation believed that the rapid and peaceful settlement of the question of the status of the 17 remaining Non-Self-Governing Territories was not an impossible task. Although those Territories were at different stages of development and were in very different geographical and historical circumstances, with goodwill and cooperation from all sides solutions could be found for each case. In that respect, the conduct of the Governments of New Zealand and France with regard to Tokelau and New Caledonia, respectively, was exemplary. The Nouméa Accord provided a sound basis for the fulfilment of all the legitimate political aspirations of the New Caledonians.

11. With regard to the island of Guam, his delegation felt that, despite the progress made, much more needed to be done. It was therefore sponsoring a draft resolution which called for dialogue, consultations and cooperation between the Government of the United States of America and the territorial Government of Guam. Contrary to what the representative of the United States of America had said, the draft resolution had not been drawn up without consulting the main parties concerned. The United States of America and the Territory of Guam had both been consulted, but the representatives of the United States of America had categorically refused to discuss the contents of the draft resolution. The sponsors of the draft resolution saw it as a beginning rather than an end. Papua New Guinea therefore appealed to the Government of the United States of America to study it carefully and begin the process of consultations with the people of Guam.

12. His delegation was willing to cooperate with all delegations concerned to eliminate the last vestiges of colonialism. In particular, it was in favour of organizing visiting missions to the Territories concerned to ascertain the wishes of the peoples and of holding referendums or other forms of consultation with a view to the self-determination of the peoples concerned. Since there was a risk that the Special Committee might not achieve all the objectives of the Decade by the year 2000, Papua New Guinea believed that consideration should be given to a successor arrangement to be instituted at the end of the Decade so as to bring an end to colonialism.

13. **Mr. Fils-Aimé** (Haiti) said that there was a tradition of solidarity between Haiti and the peoples living under the colonial yoke. Since it had experienced the scourge of colonialism for over three centuries, the Republic of Haiti was able to understand the dimensions of the problems that were being experienced by the peoples of the Non-Self-Governing Territories.

14. The accession of over 100 countries to national sovereignty over the past four decades was certainly a success, but the United Nations had not yet completed its task, since there were still 17 Non-Self-Governing Territories. Although some argued that most of these Territories were only small islands scattered in the Caribbean or the Pacific, as long as they were inhabited by men and women who valued liberty and equality, the human conscience would demand that those Territories should be placed at the same level as larger or more powerful Territories.

15. The Haitian delegation had noted with satisfaction the progress made in the voter identification process in Western Sahara, and with regard to the future status of New Caledonia and Tokelau. The beginning of a democratization process in East Timor was also encouraging. The statement made by the representative of the United Kingdom, in which she had said that her country was ready to consider any proposal on the future of the Territories put forward by the people of the Territories themselves had been favourably received by the Haitian delegation.

16. While freedom was often guaranteed by independence, there were nevertheless other options and other kinds of autonomy for the peoples of those Territories. The administering Powers and the United Nations must therefore organize political-education programmes for those peoples. Similarly, visiting missions and regional seminars were extremely useful for gaining an understanding of the real problems faced by populations. However, the right to freedom and self-determination was not merely the outcome of a series of political measures. It also included the right to have enough to eat, the right to health and education, the right to work and leisure, the right to protect one's environment and natural resources and the right to preserve one's culture and traditions. In order for any political freedom to be viable, it must have a firm socio-economic basis. Haiti therefore appealed to the administering Powers and the specialized agencies of the United Nations to help those Territories set out on the road to sustainable development and take up the challenges that lay before them.

17. **Mr. Wilmot** (Ghana) said that it was regrettable that, 38 years after the adoption of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples, there were still 17 Non-Self-Governing Territories. He called upon all administering Powers of those Territories to follow the example of New Zealand which, through its constructive cooperation with the population of Tokelau and the United Nations, had promoted the socio-economic

development of those islands and the advancement of their population towards the exercise of its right to self-determination.

18. In accordance with the recommendations contained in the Special Committee's report (A/53/23), which his delegation fully supported, the right to self-determination was one of the inalienable rights of non-self-governing populations and the administering Powers had a duty to promote the socio-economic development of the Territories and preserve their cultural identity. It was also their duty to continue to take all the measures necessary to protect the environment of the Territories under their administration and to deal with such problems as drug-trafficking, money-laundering and other offences.

19. Under Article 73 *e* of the Charter of the United Nations, the administering Powers had a duty to transmit regularly to the Secretary-General information relating to conditions in the Territories, and the political aspirations expressed by the peoples of the Territories in free and fair referendums or other forms of consultation. They also had a duty to cooperate with United Nations visiting missions in order to enable them to obtain first-hand information.

20. His delegation commended the Secretary-General and the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of Indonesia and Portugal on the progress made towards a settlement of the question of East Timor, and noted that the objectives of the Declaration could not be attained without the full cooperation of the administering Powers.

21. His delegation was pleased the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General, Mr. James Baker, had managed to lay the groundwork for a settlement of the question of Western Sahara. Ghana fully supported the aspirations of the Saharan people to self-determination and urged all sides to show flexibility and restraint. He reaffirmed the need for Morocco and Frente POLISARIO to continue their direct talks under United Nations auspices with a view to holding the referendum as soon as possible.

22. Ghana urged all the administering Powers, in compliance with the resolutions of the General Assembly and the Special Committee, to give consideration in all their actions to the human, political and economic rights of the peoples of the Non-Self-Governing Territories.

23. He urged all Member States to contribute to the efforts of the United Nations to eliminate colonialism by the end of the millennium and invited all United Nations agencies and bodies to promote the socio-economic development of the Non-Self-Governing Territories.

24. **Mr. Snoussi (Morocco)** said that the question of Western Sahara was not a question of decolonization but of territorial integrity. After giving a brief history of the Territory, he recalled that the International Court of Justice had recognized that the Territory belonged to Morocco, and that his Government had proposed the holding of a referendum as a token of its good faith.

25. Pursuant to the settlement plan and the identification criteria endorsed by the Security Council in its resolution 725 (1991) of 31 December 1991, which had been accepted by the two parties, all the Saharans who had been included in the 1974 census, or had resided in the Territory for a certain period, or whose parents had left the Territory for political or economic reasons, were entitled to take part in the referendum.

26. The previous Secretary-General had encouraged Morocco to accept a compromise, the criteria for which were even more restrictive. The other party had finally refused to accept that compromise, wishing to apply only that part of the settlement plan that would enable it to hold a referendum that suited its own purposes. Having for a long time claimed that the Saharan population was several times greater than that of the population recorded in the 1974 census, the other party was currently attempting to restrict participation in the referendum to those who had taken part in the 1974 census, thereby excluding tens of thousands of genuine Saharans.

27. In his report of 24 November 1995 (S/1995/986), the Secretary-General had clearly indicated that the other party had been responsible for the obstacles that it had encountered, and that there had been no progress towards a settlement of the issue despite the successive concessions made by Morocco until 1996.

28. In 1997, the other party had signed the Houston agreements, which stipulated that applicants from census groups H41, H61 and J51/52 could present themselves individually in order to be identified. However, hardly had the other party returned from Houston than it refused to participate in the identification of anyone who had not been involved in the 1974 census.

29. For six years the settlement of the issue had been thwarted by the problem of identification. In order for a truly free and transparent referendum to be organized, each applicant must be allowed to report in person in order to give proof of his eligibility without being subject to any discrimination.

30. Only one of the so-called petitioners heard by the Committee was Saharan. Had Morocco invited the last 100 refugees who had returned from the Hamada camps to testify

before the Committee, they would have said that they had lived under threat of arms and torture when they had dared to express dissenting opinions. They would have said that they had been forced to state that they wished to live in the east, in that no man's land where there were no wells or grazing land, and they would have described how their rights had been flouted. They would have asked why the international community had remained silent in the face of so many abuses.

31. His Government was resolved to cooperate with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees but warned him about the need to do everything possible to protect the refugees from the pressures to which they were being subjected to make them vote to order.

32. Morocco, which had already contributed several million dollars towards the management, upkeep and housing of MINURSO, offered it all the facilities it needed in order to implement its mandate. Although the presence in Morocco of MINURSO, ever since it had first been deployed in 1991, was regulated by an exchange of official letters between the Prime Minister of Morocco and the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Morocco had closely studied the agreement on the status of MINURSO which had been submitted to it by the Secretariat of the United Nations. It was confident that the United Nations would take into consideration the amendments which it had proposed in order to facilitate the early conclusion of an agreement. Morocco would continue to cooperate fully with the Security Council and the Secretary-General in order to assist them to fully and faithfully implement the settlement plan and the Houston agreements. It was convinced that, if all the provisions of the plan were respected without discrimination or manipulation, the cause of territorial integrity which it championed would prevail over vague desires for separation and fragmentation.

33. **Mr. Morales** (Spain), referring to the statement made on 7 October 1998 by the petitioner from Gibraltar, Mr. Caruana, noted that in the majority of cases, colonial peoples had exercised their right to self-determination and that the principle was equally applicable to the majority of the 17 Territories which remained under colonial rule. However, where colonies had been established on the territory of other States, decolonization could only be achieved by re-establishing the territorial integrity of the States involved. Gibraltar came into the second category.

34. It was not just Spain which sought formal application of the principle of territorial integrity to the decolonization of Gibraltar. It was also the annual practice of the United Nations to urge the United Kingdom and Spain to continue

their negotiations with a view to ending the colonial status of Gibraltar.

35. Gibraltar, geographically and historically an integral part of Spain, differed from other colonial Territories that had been seized by force in that it had been made into a military base by the colonial Power. Gibraltar was a colony of the United Kingdom, even if the real inhabitants of the Territory were not a colonial people. That people was not the indigenous population; it was composed of the descendants of British settlers and others whom the colonial Power had brought to Gibraltar. Mr. Caruana was right: Gibraltar had been populated by British people for 294 years. It was precisely for that reason that the right to self-determination, the purpose of which was to end colonialism, could not be invoked in order to perpetuate the colonial phenomenon.

36. Furthermore, it was not possible to compare, as Mr. Caruana had done, the situation of Gibraltar with that of the United States, Australia or New Zealand prior to independence. It more closely resembled the situation of Hong Kong or Macau, the existence of which affected the territorial integrity of the State in which each had been implanted.

37. Gibraltar could continue to be a British colony or revert to Spain. No other solution was possible. Spain would continue to oppose any initiative that would lead to the question of Gibraltar being settled other than in accordance with the retrocession clause of the Treaty of Utrecht, which had established Spain's right to exercise sovereignty over Gibraltar, should the latter cease to be British, pursuant to the consultations it had held with the United Kingdom in Brussels, the tenets of the United Nations and the decisions of the General Assembly. The fourth option set forth in General Assembly resolution 2625 (XXV) was relevant only to Territories to which the principle of self-determination was applicable, not to Gibraltar.

38. The Spanish Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr. Matutes, had said that he was prepared to meet the Gibraltar Minister, but the latter had rejected sight unseen the proposal made by Mr. Matutes at negotiations between the Governments of Spain and the United Kingdom in December 1997. It was not by depriving Spanish fishermen of their only means of subsistence and invoking the sovereign rights of Gibraltar over waters over which Spain did not recognize the jurisdiction of the United Kingdom that the latter would create conditions favourable to dialogue.

39. **Ms. Smith** (United Kingdom), speaking in exercise of the right of reply to comments made by the Cuban, Brazilian (on behalf of the Southern Common Market) and Chilean

delegations, recalled that the Permanent Representative of the United Kingdom had clearly set forth the position of his Government with regard to the Falkland Islands when he had spoken in exercise of the right of reply in the General Assembly on 22 September 1998. She also recalled that he had clearly set out the position of his Government with regard to Gibraltar when he had spoken in exercise of the right of reply in the General Assembly on 23 September 1998 in response to a statement made by the Prime Minister of Spain.

40. **Mr. Zohar** (Israel), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said he regretted that the Papua New Guinea delegation had included Palestine among the territories currently being examined by the Committee. The question of Palestine was not a colonial question. It concerned a territorial dispute between two neighbouring countries which had been the subject of detailed studies carried out as part of the Madrid conference and Oslo Accords in order to enable the parties to reach a peaceful solution that would take into account all aspects of the problem. In the course of the current week, Israeli and Palestinian delegations would meet near Washington under the aegis of the United States with a view to strengthening relations between the two countries as part of the peace process, and his delegation hoped that the meeting would bear fruit. The Palestinian population of the whole of the Gaza Strip and of 98 per cent of the West Bank was governed by the Palestinian Authority and its democratically elected president, Mr. Yasser Arafat. Palestinians had their own flag, their own executive power, separate judicial and legislative bodies and a separate armed police force. Israel could not be held responsible for their future, since they were neither its subjects, nor its enemies, but simply its neighbours. His delegation therefore considered that the question of Palestine, already considered by other United Nations bodies, should not be raised in the Committee. It urged all delegations to support the current peace process.

The meeting rose at 4 p.m.

**General Assembly**

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Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee)**Summary record of the 7th meeting**

Held at Headquarters, New York, on Tuesday, 13 October 1998, at 3 p.m.

Chairman: Mr. Macedo (Mexico)**Contents**

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The meeting was called to order at 3.20 p.m.

Organization of work (A/C.4/53/L.5)

1. **The Chairman** said that the Committee would take action on draft decisions and draft resolutions in the order in which they were listed in the document on organization of work (A/C.4/53/L.5).

Agenda item 18: Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples (Territories not covered under other agenda items) (continued)

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Agenda item 90: Offers by Member States of study and training facilities for inhabitants of Non-Self-Governing Territories (continued)

Draft resolution relating to information from Non-Self-Governing Territories transmitted under Article 73 e of the Charter of the United Nations, submitted under agenda item 87 (A/53/23 (Part IV), chap. VIII, para. 7)

2. **The Chairman** informed the Committee that a recorded vote had been requested.

3. **Mr. Scott** (United States of America) said that his delegation would abstain as it had done for seven years because the draft resolution in question gave the General Assembly the right to determine if a Territory had become self-governing within the meaning of the Charter. His Government believed that in the final analysis it was for the administering Power to determine when the provisions of Article 73 e of the Charter no longer applied.

4. *A recorded vote was taken.*

In favour:

Algeria, Andorra, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Belarus, Belgium, Benin, Bolivia, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Burkina Faso, Canada, Cape Verde, Chile, China, Colombia, Côte d'Ivoire, Cuba, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Denmark, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Fiji, Finland, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Grenada, Guatemala, Guinea, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Ireland, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Malaysia, Maldives, Malta, Marshall Islands, Mexico, Mongolia, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Niger, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Romania, Russian Federation, Saint Lucia, San Marino, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Singapore, Slovakia, Solomon Islands, South Africa, Spain, Sudan, Sweden, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Tunisia, Turkey, Uganda, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Republic of Tanzania, Venezuela, Viet Nam, Yemen, Zambia, Zimbabwe.

Against:

None.

Abstaining:

France, Israel, Monaco, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America.

5. *The draft resolution was adopted by 116 votes to none, with 5 abstentions.*

6. **Ms. Smith** (United Kingdom), speaking in explanation of vote, said that, as in previous years, her delegation had abstained on the draft resolution because her Government, which was continuing to meet its obligations under Article 73 e of the Charter in respect of the United Kingdom Overseas Territories it administered, did not agree with the statement in paragraph 2 of the draft resolution that it was for the General Assembly to decide when a Non-Self-Governing Territory had reached a level of self-government sufficient to relieve the administering Power of the obligation to submit information under Article 73 e of the Charter. Such decisions must be left to the government of the Territory in question and to the administering Power concerned.

7. **The Chairman** said he took it that the Committee had concluded its consideration of agenda item 87.

8. *It was so decided.*

Draft resolution relating to economic and other activities which affect the interests of the peoples of the Non-Self-Governing Territories, submitted under agenda item 88 (A/53/23 (Part III), chap. V, para. 8)

9. **Mr. Scott** (United States of America) said that he was requesting a separate vote on deleting paragraph 7 of the draft resolution. His delegation opposed the underlying principle of the draft that the mere presence of foreign economic activities in a Non-Self-Governing Territory prejudiced the exercise of the right to self-determination. Although the draft was a distinct improvement over the corresponding texts of previous years, the United States would vote against it if paragraph 7 was not deleted or amended. The paragraph served no purpose since paragraphs 4 and 5 already expressed the considerations behind it, and the conclusion to be drawn from it would be that it was to be assumed that there were foreign economic activities in any dependent Territory because of its very status as a Territory. Illicit fishing activities were always damaging wherever they occurred, but paragraph 7 supposed that such activities were endemic to dependent Territories, and his Government took issue with that idea.

10. It was well known that the United States had created conservation zones and marine reserves in its Territories and that it had always sought to promote environmental protection and biological diversity. The unconditional transfer of some Territories and the resources found there would therefore be a sensitive issue. No United Nations report had ever documented any harmful effects from foreign economic activities in the Non-Self-Governing Territories. His delegation wondered whether the Committee should continue to consider the resolution in question year after year, recalling that the United States Virgin Islands delegation had stated more than once that it would be better to assign the consideration of certain aspects of the resolution to other committees.

11. **Mr. Mekdad** (Syrian Arab Republic) said that, while he understood the point of view of the United States delegation, his Government believed that colonialism had particularly serious consequences for the economic situation of colonized territories. His delegation would therefore vote in favour of retaining paragraph 7 of the draft resolution.

12. **Mr. Scott** (United States of America) once again urged delegations to take a separate vote on paragraph 7 of the draft resolution.

13. **The Chairman** said that the Committee could apply rule 89 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly or could proceed directly to a vote on the United States proposal that paragraph 7 of the draft resolution should be deleted. In order not to waste time, he suggested that a recorded vote should be taken on the deletion of paragraph 7.

14. *It was so decided.*

15. *A recorded vote was taken.*

In favour:

Israel, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America.

Against:

Algeria, Angola, Argentina, Bangladesh, Belarus, Bolivia, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Chile, China, Colombia, Côte d'Ivoire, Cuba, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Ecuador, Egypt, Eritrea, Fiji, Guinea, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Malaysia, Mexico, Mongolia, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, Niger, Pakistan, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Portugal, Qatar, Russian Federation, Singapore, Solomon Islands, South Africa, Sudan, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, Tunisia, Uganda, United Republic of Tanzania, Venezuela, Viet Nam, Yemen, Zambia, Zimbabwe.

Abstaining:

Andorra, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Bahamas, Belgium, Benin, Canada, Cape Verde, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Haiti, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Malta, Marshall Islands, Monaco, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Poland, Republic of Korea, Romania, San Marino, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Turkey, Ukraine.

16. *The United States proposal was rejected by 60 votes to 3, with 42 abstentions.*

17. *A recorded vote was taken on the draft resolution as a whole, as reproduced in document A/53/23 (Part III), chapter V, paragraph 8.*

In favour:

Algeria, Andorra, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Belarus, Belgium, Benin, Bolivia, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Canada, Cape Verde, Chile, China,

Colombia, Côte d'Ivoire, Cuba, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Denmark, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Fiji, Finland, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Grenada, Guinea, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Ireland, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Lesotho, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Malaysia, Maldives, Malta, Marshall Islands, Mexico, Mongolia, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Niger, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Romania, Russian Federation, Saint Lucia, San Marino, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Solomon Islands, South Africa, Spain, Sudan, Sweden, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Tunisia, Turkey, Uganda, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Republic of Tanzania, Venezuela, Viet Nam, Yemen, Zambia, Zimbabwe.

Against:

Israel, United States of America.

Abstaining:

France, Monaco, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

18. *The draft resolution, as reproduced in document A/53/23, part III, chapter V, paragraph 8, was adopted by 120 votes to 2, with 3 abstentions.*

19. **The Chairman** said he took it that the Committee had concluded its consideration of agenda item 88.

20. *It was so decided.*

Draft decision submitted under agenda item 18: Military activities and arrangements by colonial Powers in territories under their administration (A/53/23 (Part III), chap. VI, para. 7)

21. **The Chairman** informed the Committee that a recorded vote had been requested on the draft decision.

22. **Mr. Scott** (United States of America), speaking in explanation of vote before the voting, said that his Government was firmly opposed to the premise on which the draft decision was based, namely, that the mere existence of military interests in a Non-Self-Governing Territory was prejudicial to the exercise of the right to self-determination. The right of self-defence was recognized by the Charter of

the United Nations. Furthermore, it was commonly acknowledged that States and their peoples had the right to provide themselves with a common defence system. Each situation must be examined in context. It had never been established that the military bases on Guam were preventing the people of that Territory from exercising their right to self-determination. His delegation urged the Committee to reject the draft decision.

23. *A recorded vote was taken.*

In favour:

Algeria, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Benin, Bolivia, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Chile, China, Colombia, Côte d'Ivoire, Cuba, Cyprus, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Fiji, Ghana, Grenada, Guinea, Guyana, Haiti, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Jamaica, Jordan, Kenya, Kuwait, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Lesotho, Malaysia, Maldives, Mexico, Mongolia, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, Niger, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Qatar, Saint Lucia, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, Solomon Islands, South Africa, Sudan, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, Togo, Tunisia, Uganda, United Arab Emirates, United Republic of Tanzania, Venezuela, Viet Nam, Yemen, Zambia, Zimbabwe.

Against:

Andorra, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Belgium, Canada, Cape Verde, Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Kazakhstan, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Malta, Marshall Islands, Monaco, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Romania, San Marino, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Turkey, Ukraine, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America.

Abstaining:

Belarus, Russian Federation.

24. *The draft decision was adopted by 74 votes to 44, with 2 abstentions.*

25. **Mr. Wimmer** (Austria), speaking in explanation of vote on behalf of the European Union, said that four years ago, the Union had discussed with the Special Committee the adoption of a more pragmatic approach, with a view to making it possible to reach consensus on some controversial

issues before the Committee. The European Union welcomed the fact that in 1997 the consolidated draft resolution on small Territories had been adopted without a vote and that progress had been made towards reaching a consensus on the resolution concerning economic activities. Nevertheless, in 1998 it was again compelled to oppose the draft decision on military activities, since it referred to an issue that was not included on the list of matters which the General Assembly had referred to the Special Committee.

Draft resolution submitted under agenda item 89 on the implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples by the specialized agencies and the international institutions associated with the United Nations (A/53/23 (Part IV), chap. VII, para. 11).

26. **The Chairman** informed the Committee that a recorded vote had been requested on the draft resolution.

27. **Mr. Scott** (United States of America), speaking in explanation of vote before the voting, said that his delegation would abstain, judging it neither appropriate nor necessary to establish a link between the activities of the specialized agencies and the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples, and that such activities were already regulated by the mandate guidelines of each agency.

28. *A recorded vote was taken.*

In favour:

Algeria, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Belarus, Benin, Bolivia, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Cape Verde, Chile, China, Colombia, Côte d'Ivoire, Cuba, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Fiji, Ghana, Grenada, Guatemala, Guinea, Guyana, Haiti, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Jamaica, Jordan, Kenya, Kuwait, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Madagascar, Malaysia, Maldives, Mexico, Mongolia, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Niger, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Qatar, Saint Lucia, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Singapore, Slovenia, Solomon Islands, South Africa, Sudan, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, Togo, Tunisia, Uganda, United Arab Emirates, United Republic of Tanzania, Venezuela, Viet Nam, Yemen, Zambia, Zimbabwe.

Against:

None.

Abstaining:

Andorra, Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Canada, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Kazakhstan, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Malta, Marshall Islands, Monaco, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Romania, Russian Federation, San Marino, Slovakia, Spain, Sweden, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Turkey, Ukraine, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America.

29. *The draft resolution was adopted by 85 votes to 0, with 41 abstentions.*

30. **Mr. Wimmer** (Austria), speaking in explanation of vote on behalf of the European Union, said that the Union was consistent in wishing to support the endeavours of the specialized agencies to provide assistance to Non-Self-Governing Territories, in particular in the humanitarian and technical fields, in addition to the educational field, but believed that the mandates of those agencies must be strictly respected.

31. **The Chairman** said that the Committee had concluded its consideration of agenda item 89.

32. *It was so decided.*

Draft resolution submitted under agenda item 90 relating to offers by Member States of study and training facilities for inhabitants of Non-Self-Governing Territories (A/C.4/53/L.3)

33. **The Chairman** announced that Jamaica, the Philippines and the Sudan had joined the co-sponsors of the draft resolution, who hoped that the Committee would adopt the draft without a vote.

34. *The draft resolution was adopted without a vote.*

35. **The Chairman** said that the Committee had concluded consideration of agenda item 90.

36. *It was so decided.*

Draft resolutions submitted under agenda item 18 relating to specific Territories (A/C.4/53/L.2, A/C.4/53/L.4, A/53/23 (Part V), (Part VI), (Part VII) and (Part VIII))

Programme budget implications of the draft resolutions

37. **Mr. Sattar** (Secretary of the Committee), said that the adoption of the draft resolutions submitted under agenda item 18 relating to specific Territories would have no additional programme budget implications, as those texts were covered by the resources provided in chapter I D (Department of General Assembly Affairs and Conference Services) of the programme budget for the 1998-1999 biennium.

Draft decision relating to the question of Gibraltar (A/C.4/53/L.2)

38. **The Chairman** proposed that the Committee should adopt the draft decision without a vote.

39. *The draft decision relating to the question of Gibraltar was adopted without a vote.*

Draft resolution on Western Sahara (A/C.4/53/L.4)

40. **The Chairman** drew the Committee's attention to the draft resolution and asked whether it would be prepared to waive rule 120 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly. He said that if he heard no objection, he would take it that the Committee wished to waive that rule.

41. *It was so decided.*

Budget implications of the draft resolution on Western Sahara

42. **Mr. Sattar** (Secretary of the Committee), having read out paragraphs 7 to 10 of the draft resolution, summarized the situation as described in the report of the Secretary-General (A/1998/849) of 11 September 1998. An extension of the MINURSO mandate would have no financial implications for the regular budget. The activities requested in paragraphs 9 and 10 of the draft resolution would be covered by the resources provided in chapters I B and 2 A respectively of the programme budget for the 1998-1999 biennium.

43. **Mr. Snoussi** (Morocco) said that his country did not consider that the question of Western Sahara came within the remit of the Special Committee, in particular since the Security Council had taken up the matter. He welcomed the progress that had been made, but regretted the numerous obstacles that had been created by the other party,

particularly the constraints to which refugees in the Hamada camps were subjected. He was afraid that the other party might exploit the repatriation operation in order to keep those refugees under its control and influence, and that it would continue to demonstrate the bad faith and lack of goodwill which had hitherto characterized its attitude. Despite the years that had been lost as a result of the other party's procrastination, Morocco had not despaired and would continue to cooperate fully with the Secretary-General, his Special Representative and his Personal Representative. The statement made by the Secretary of the Committee went beyond strictly budgetary limits, and he would like to see the written text.

44. **Mr. Islam** (Pakistan) said he also wished the statement made by the Secretary of the Committee to be distributed as a Committee document.

45. **The Chairman** said that he would see what he could do, but that the matter was a delicate one. He proposed that the Committee should adopt the draft resolution without a vote.

46. *The draft resolution concerning Western Sahara was adopted without a vote.*

47. **Ms. Proidel** (Austria), speaking on behalf of the European Union, the Central and Eastern European countries associated with the European Union, the associated country Cyprus and the European Free Trade Association country member of the European Economic Area Norway, welcomed the adoption of the resolution by consensus. The European Union had always supported the holding of a free, fair and impartial referendum on the self-determination of the people of Western Sahara. While taking note of the progress achieved over the past months, the European Union expressed concern regarding the question of the three tribal groups, which remained unresolved. In addition, it shared the concern of the Secretary-General regarding the delays and lack of cooperation with UNHCR. It encouraged the parties to cooperate fully with the High Commissioner for Refugees to enable Saharan refugees to be repatriated. The European Union reiterated its support to the Secretary-General, his Personal Envoy and his Special Representative and paid tribute to the crucial role which MINURSO continued to play in the peace process.

48. **Mr. Lewis** (Antigua and Barbuda) said that he was not convinced that the settlement plan was one that would inspire confidence in the parties and doubted that any real progress had been made in the situation. The question of Western Sahara was indeed one of decolonization, and he hoped that the Saharan people could soon become master of its destiny.

49. **Mr. Diop** (Senegal) thanked the representative of Morocco for his brilliant intervention and agreed that the settlement of that question was outside the competence of the Fourth Committee. He was nevertheless pleased that it had been possible to adopt the draft resolution by consensus.

Draft resolution on New Caledonia (A/53/23 (Part V), chap. IX, para. 33)

50. **Mr. Zipper de Fabiani** (France) said that the Noumea Accord, signed on 5 May 1998, provided for taking Kanak identity more broadly into account in the political and social organization of New Caledonia. It also provided for modification of the institutions of New Caledonia and shared sovereignty through a considerable and progressive transfer of powers. Moreover, under the Accord, New Caledonia would be able to exercise some powers in international relations, particularly on the regional level. Access to full sovereignty would be the subject of a referendum after a period of 15 to 20 years. Furthermore, the Accord contained provisions relating to the United Nations and provided that "The progress made in the emancipation process shall be brought to the attention of the United Nations."

51. Lastly, the procedure for approval of the Noumea Accord was already in progress, the National Assembly and the Senate at a joint meeting having already approved the constitutional act on New Caledonia on 6 July 1998.

52. In conclusion, he stressed that the Accord was voluntary, and had been reached in a spirit of compromise and reconciliation. He also stressed the spirit of consensus which had inspired the draft resolution, which he hoped would be adopted by the Committee. The correct version of the text had been issued as A/AC.109/L.1878/Rev.1* (reissued for technical reasons), and it was that version which should appear in the Committee's report to the General Assembly.

53. **The Chairman** invited the Commission to adopt the draft resolution without a vote.

54. *The draft resolution on New Caledonia was adopted.*

55. **Mr. Ovia** (Papua New Guinea) paid tribute to the spirit of compromise shown by France, which demonstrated what the administering Powers could do to reach a satisfactory solution to the question of Non-Self-Governing Territories. However, it would be a very long time before New Caledonia would attain full sovereignty, and therefore it would be important to continue to follow closely the situation in the Territory.

Consolidated draft resolution concerning American Samoa, Anguilla, Bermuda, the British Virgin Islands, the Cayman Islands, Montserrat, Pitcairn, St. Helena, the Turks and Caicos Islands and the United States Virgin Islands (A/53/23 (Part VI) chap. X, para. 9)

56. **Mr. Mekdad** (Syrian Arab Republic), Rapporteur of the Special Committee on Decolonization, read out several amendments proposed by the delegation of the United Kingdom to the draft resolution. The Special Committee had accepted those amendments, thereby showing its willingness to cooperate with administering Powers. The text of the amendments had been circulated to all States members of the Special Committee; none had raised any objections. They would be introduced Territory by Territory.

Oral amendments to the draft resolution

57. In part III concerning Bermuda, in the fourth preambular paragraph, the phrase "the report of the intended closures of bases" should be replaced by "the closure of bases". In paragraph 3, the second line, the words "of development" should be deleted; in the third line, "certain military bases and installations" should be replaced by "United States military bases and installations". He hoped that consultations had taken place between the delegations of the United Kingdom and the United States of America.

58. In part VI concerning Montserrat, in the sixth preambular paragraph, the second line, "one third" should be replaced by "two thirds". In paragraph 2, at the end of the second line the words "continue to" should be inserted before "provide".

59. In part VIII concerning St. Helena, the second preambular paragraph should be replaced by the following: "Welcoming the appointment of a commission of inquiry to examine and report on the current Constitution in the light of the request by the Legislative Council of St. Helena that the administering Power conduct a constitutional review in the Territory,". At the end of the fifth preambular paragraph, after "food production" the phrase "and the continuing negotiations to allow access to Ascension Island by civilian charter flights" should be added.

60. In part IX concerning the Turks and Caicos Islands, the second preambular paragraph should be deleted.

61. **The Chairman** said that, as the amendments had been proposed by one of the administering Powers and accepted by the Special Committee, the Fourth Committee should be able to approve them.

62. **Mr. Dausá Cespedes** (Cuba), Chairman of the Special Committee, said that paragraphs 1 and 2 of part VI of the

draft resolution, concerning Montserrat, had been reversed in the Spanish version.

63. **The Chairman** said that the Secretariat would see that the text was identical in all versions. If he heard no objection, he would take it that the Committee accepted the amendments submitted by the representative of Syria as proposed by the United Kingdom.

64. *It was so decided.*

65. **The Chairman** proposed that the Committee should begin its consideration of the draft resolution as orally amended.

66. **Mr. Scott** (United States of America) said that the consolidated resolution was no longer what it had been because a key element was missing: the question of Guam. His delegation regretted that the question had been made the subject of a separate draft resolution, calling into question all the efforts made in good faith by the parties involved over a period of many years, to reach a compromise. The new text, which had been drafted and adopted by the Special Committee without taking into consideration the concerns of the administering Power, treated years of dialogue as worthless. His delegation did not understand why the question of Guam would receive treatment different from that of the other Territories under United States administration. It remained convinced, nevertheless, that by continuing the negotiations and dialogue with the Special Committee, a consensus text on the question of Guam could be achieved.

67. While his delegation was fully aware that Guam was a Non-Self-Governing Territory that aspired to a clearer definition of its status and perhaps to an eventual decision by the people for independence, it wished to specify that those people themselves had expressed, through their elected representatives, their desire to strengthen their status as a commonwealth of the United States.

68. He referred to the close ties between Guam and the United States, for evidence of which it was necessary to look no further than the forthcoming visit of the President of the United States to the Territory and a draft resolution that had recently been submitted to the United States Congress by a Representative, Mr. Underwood, to commemorate 100 years of friendly relations between Guam and the United States. The resolution in question had been prepared jointly by the people of Guam and the people of the United States, acting through their elected representatives in Congress. It was to be hoped that the Committee and the Special Committee on Decolonization would endeavour to draft a text in a similar spirit.

69. In conclusion, he said that his delegation would be prepared to agree that the consolidated draft resolution should be adopted by consensus, on one condition: that the question of Guam was postponed until such time as wording acceptable to all the parties concerned could be found and agreement was reached on a text that could be attached to the consolidated resolution for submission to the General Assembly. Otherwise, his delegation might be unable to join in a consensus on the consolidated resolution when it was considered by the General Assembly.

70. **Mr. Zahid** (Morocco) said that, if he had understood the matter correctly, the United States delegation would be prepared to accept the consolidated draft resolution without a vote on condition that consideration of the resolution on Guam was postponed. He feared that, in the event agreement was not reached on that point, the United States delegation might subsequently request a vote on the consolidated draft resolution and the Committee's decision might then be rejected by the General Assembly. Accordingly, he proposed that consideration of both draft resolutions (the consolidated draft resolution and the draft resolution on Guam) should be postponed until such time as the matter could be further clarified.

71. **The Chairman** said that he would conduct further consultations on the question of Guam. While he realized that the question of Guam and the matter of the consolidated draft resolution were obviously related, he wished to emphasize that the agreement which the United States delegation and the Special Committee had reached was to the effect that the consolidated draft resolution would be adopted by consensus that same day, and consideration of the question of Guam would be postponed. He feared that if the Moroccan representative's proposal was accepted, the situation might become further complicated. He therefore suggested that the formula which had originally been agreed upon should be retained.

72. **Mr. Zahid** (Morocco) said that his delegation was prepared to accede to the Chairman's suggestion, but that his concern remained.

73. **The Chairman** thanked the representative of Morocco for his constructive attitude, but said he wished to make it clear that the agreement which had been reached was based on the understanding that the draft consolidated resolution would be adopted without a vote; if it were not, the Special Committee might refuse to negotiate on the question of Guam.

74. **Mr. Dausá Cespedes** (Cuba) said that he fully endorsed the Chairman's position. It was important that the agreement in question should be adhered to and that the

consolidated draft resolution should be approved without a vote.

75. **Mr. Scott** (United States of America) thanked the representative of Morocco for his efforts and asked the members of the Committee to try to appreciate his delegation's tireless efforts to arrive at a consensus, both on the matter of the consolidated draft resolution and on the question of Guam and the other decolonization issues.

76. **The Chairman** said he took it that the Committee wished to adopt the consolidated draft resolution, as orally revised.

77. *It was so decided.*

Draft resolution on Tokelau (A/53/23 (Part VII), chap. XI, para. 9)

78. *The draft resolution was adopted.*

79. **Mr. Ovia** (Papua New Guinea) thanked the Government of New Zealand for its unstinted cooperation with the Special Committee, especially with the sponsors of the draft resolution, including its main sponsors, Papua New Guinea and Fiji. He also thanked the people of Tokelau, and noted that that Territory had also been included in the consolidated draft resolution, but that, following an agreement between its representatives and New Zealand, it had been made the subject of a separate draft resolution which had been adopted by consensus.

Draft resolution on Guam (A/53/23 (Part VIII), chap. XII, para. 9)

80. **The Chairman** said he took it that the Committee wished to postpone consideration of the draft resolution on Guam so that consultations between the Special Committee and the delegation of the United States could take place. He also stated that he had received a letter from the Government of Guam, and that he had asked the Secretariat to place the text of that letter at the disposal of the members of the Committee.

81. **Mr. Scott** (United States of America) said that he would have copies of the draft resolution before the United States Congress distributed to Committee members. He noted in that connection that the draft resolution submitted by Mr. Underwood was worded in terms that were not altogether identical with those he had used in the letter from the Government of Guam addressed to the Fourth Committee.

82. **Mr. Ovia** (Papua New Guinea) thanked the United States delegation for the highly valuable information that it

had given to the Special Committee, but noted that, according to the agreement between the Special Committee and the United States delegation, the people of Guam were to be associated with the consultations. He hoped that Mr. Underwood would address the Government of the United States in the same terms he had used in addressing the Fourth Committee.

83. **The Chairman** said that, as a member of the Committee, he had always felt that one of the most troublesome problems, and one that could generate the most confusion, was the disparate manner in which the Special Committee submitted its draft resolutions. As a corrective measure, he suggested that the draft resolutions should be issued in a single document, which could subsequently be incorporated into the Committee's report. That procedure should facilitate the consideration and adoption of resolutions and decisions. He hoped that the Special Committee would take his suggestion into account. He wished to emphasize that, in making that suggestion, he was not commenting in any way on the substance of the draft resolutions in question, but only seeking to simplify the Committee's work.

84. **Mr. Mekdad** (Syrian Arab Republic) said he endorsed the Chairman's suggestion. The problem was exclusively technical in nature, and could be easily resolved. He promised to do his utmost, with the assistance of the Secretariat and the other members of the Special Committee, to ensure that the Committee would be presented with a document that was homogeneous, clear and manageable.

The meeting rose at 5.35 p.m.



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Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee)

Summary record of the 8th meeting

Held at Headquarters, New York, on Wednesday, 14 October 1998, at 3 p.m.

Chairman: Mr. Macedo (Mexico)

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Agenda item 81: Effects of atomic radiation

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The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.

Agenda item 81: Effects of atomic radiation (A/53/46, A/53/478, A/53/481 and A/C.4/53/L.6)

1. **Mr. Lindell** (Sweden), introducing the draft resolution on the effects of atomic radiation (A/C.4/53/L.6), said that, as requested by the General Assembly at its 52nd session, the Committee would review the functioning of the United Nations Scientific Committee on the Effects of Atomic Radiation in the light of the recommendations of the World Health Organization (WHO) and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). Since the establishment of the Scientific Committee in 1955, States' concerns regarding the effects of atomic radiation had changed and the sources of such radiation had multiplied, but the work of the Scientific Committee had lost none of its importance. Despite the cessation of atmospheric weapons tests, many radionuclides were still being released into the environment by nuclear power plants or as a result of their use in medicine, agriculture and industry. There was also a growing awareness of the many natural radiation sources. The Scientific Committee continued to collect data on radiation doses and the attendant risks, such as cancer and genetic mutation. It also studied the effects of radiation and the combined effects of ionizing radiation and other agents.

2. In 1995, the Scientific Committee had begun a new programme to review the sources, exposure and biological effects of ionizing radiation. The comprehensive report which it would publish in the year 2000 would provide up-to-date information on the state of knowledge in the field at the end of the millennium. The Scientific Committee, which was the definitive authority on atomic radiation, provided a remarkable example of efficiency, and its work and publications guided and encouraged research throughout the world. He therefore hoped that the draft resolution which recommended that the functions and role of the Scientific Committee, including the present reporting arrangements, should be maintained, would be adopted by consensus. The sponsors had done their best to accommodate the concerns of some delegations. The draft resolution was sponsored by the member States of the European Union, Argentina, Australia, Belarus, India, Malaysia, New Zealand, the Philippines, Poland, Thailand and Ukraine.

3. **Mr. Wimmer** (Austria), speaking on behalf of the European Union, said that the States members of the European Union had sponsored the draft resolution and that the Central and Eastern European countries associated with the European Union, the associated country Cyprus and the European Free Trade Association countries members of the

European Economic Community, associated themselves with a statement.

4. The Scientific Committee, which had been established in order to collect and evaluate the available information on the effects of ionizing radiation upon man and his environment, had become the primary world authority in that regard.

5. The European Union hoped that the fruitful cooperation between the Scientific Committee and the other relevant United Nations bodies and international organizations would continue. It supported the recommendation made by IAEA and WHO that the Scientific Committee's current functions and independent role, including the reporting arrangements, should be maintained.

6. The European Union awaited with interest the publication in the year 2000 of a report on consequences of the Chernobyl accident and the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, which would make it possible to better assess the harmful effect of accidental, medical or occupational exposure to radiation on victims and their progeny. The Scientific Committee's reports would continue to serve as a basis for the drawing up of national and international standards for protection against the harmful effects of radiation. In closing, he reiterated the European Union's support for the Scientific Committee.

7. **Mr. Relang** (Marshall Islands) said that between 1946 and 1957, the Republic of the Marshall Islands had been the site of 67 nuclear weapons tests. The total yield of the bombs tested had been 7,200 times more powerful than the two atomic weapons used during the Second World War. An understanding of the effects of excessive doses of radioactive fallout on human beings and the environment had been gained from those tests at the population's expense. Documents which had been declassified had shown that the effects of the radiation were far more serious than had been thought. The inhabitants of the Marshall Islands and groups of people elsewhere in the world had suffered from those effects and would continue to do so. The number of people with radiation-related illnesses or cancer was growing at an alarming rate, a fact which was making it even more difficult to provide adequate social, health and economic services.

8. As the Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade of the Republic of the Marshall Islands had stated during the general debate of the General Assembly at its fifty-second session, the information concerning the effects of nuclear weapons that had been gained from the testing programme carried out in the Marshall Islands had helped to prevent nuclear war during the cold war era. The people of the Marshall Islands and of other Pacific islands had, therefore,

borne a disproportionate burden in that regard. In its advisory opinion on the legality of the threat or use of nuclear weapons, the International Court of Justice had recognized that the members of the international community had an obligation to achieve nuclear disarmament. His Government therefore felt all the more justified in drawing that community's attention to the effects of atomic radiation on the people of the Marshall Islands and in requesting its assistance.

9. Although his Government welcomed the past studies carried out by the Scientific Committee, it believed that those studies should be developed in such a way as to assist populations suffering from the effects of atomic radiation. He urged the Scientific Committee to give consideration to the proposals of member States which had offered to help it to do so. His Government, for its part, was willing to make available the declassified documents in its possession, which it was currently placing in a computerized record in order to facilitate consultation.

10. His delegation was not seeking to cast blame, since blame had already been accepted. It welcomed the spirit of partnership displayed by the Government of the United States of America and would endeavour, with its limited means, to assist communities which planned to resettle elsewhere. However, he requested that a second team of experts should first verify the conclusions on which those plans were based in order to prevent those who wished to resettle in possibly contaminated areas from placing themselves at risk. He again urged Governments and international organizations specializing in the field to provide the assistance needed to determine the possibilities for resettlement of those people, clean up the affected areas and dispose of or contain radioactive contaminants.

11. **Mr. Kittikhoun** (Lao People's Democratic Republic), speaking on behalf of the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN), said that for the past 43 years, the Scientific Committee had played an important role in providing impartial information on the risks of exposure to atomic radiation. He welcomed the report of the Scientific Committee (A/53/46) and, in particular, the information on the effects of radiation on people and environment, and was pleased to note that the Scientific Committee had decided to place greater emphasis on new sources of radiation and on the combined effects of radiation and other agents.

12. He noted with satisfaction that WHO and IAEA had cooperated with the Scientific Committee in 1998 and urged other United Nations bodies, particularly the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and IAEA, and other relevant international organizations to continue to provide

support to and increase their cooperation with the Scientific Committee.

13. Nuclear technology and the use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes could be of great use to humanity, particularly in the fields of medicine, industry and agriculture, where they played an increasingly important role in improving the quality of life, especially in developing countries. ASEAN called for an increase in the transfer of nuclear technology to developing countries, and asked that they should be provided with assistance in gaining free access to that technology.

14. The most effective way of diminishing the potentially harmful effects of atomic radiation would be the control or removal of its sources. In addition to the risks mentioned in chapter IV of the Scientific Committee's report, the ill-effects of radiation also resulted from the operation of unsafe nuclear power plants, the dumping of nuclear submarines on the high seas, the illicit trafficking in nuclear materials, nuclear testing and, of course, the use of nuclear weapons. It was, therefore, essential that steps should be taken to guarantee the enforcement of all internationally accepted safety standards. In 1998, the States members of ASEAN, meeting in Manila, had reaffirmed their conviction that the doctrine of nuclear deterrence was obsolete and that everything possible must be done to free the world from nuclear weapons.

15. The heads of State and Government of the ASEAN countries had all signed the Southeast Asian Nuclear Weapons-Free Zone Treaty, which had entered into force on 27 March 1997 and had been deposited with the United Nations in June 1997. ASEAN once again called on all States which possessed nuclear weapons to accede to the Protocol to that Treaty.

16. All States, both large and small, were concerned at the danger of atomic radiation. ASEAN was convinced that if the international community had the necessary political will, it could put an end to the catastrophic effects of man-made atomic radiation. For its part, it would continue to provide the Scientific Committee with its unwavering support and cooperation.

17. **Ms. Dong Guilan** (China) summarized the activities of the Scientific Committee, noting that its importance in the fields of public health and environmental quality had been clearly demonstrated.

18. In view of the importance of the work of the Scientific Committee, which was the primary international body responsible for assessing the health hazards associated with exposure to atomic radiation, her delegation supported the

report's recommendation that the current functions and role of the Scientific Committee, including its reporting arrangements, should be maintained.

19. Her Government would continue to cooperate fully with the Scientific Committee and to promote research on the effects of atomic radiation and radiological protection.

The meeting rose at 4 p.m.